

TESTIMONY OF  
LOUIS BACH  
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
MONDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> 2011

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Louis Bach and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of private enterprise in the state, and our membership is overwhelmingly comprised of small businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

The business community has a vested interest in a quality education for all Connecticut students. The success of our members depends in part on their ability to hire well-educated graduates who are prepared to meet the workforce demands of a global 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. For this reason CBIA is pleased to support the following proposals being considered today:

**SB 1106 AAC THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed Department of Early Education and Child Development is central to establishing effective state leadership in the drive to reform our schools. We recognize that the debate surrounding the organizational consolidation proposed by this legislation will take time to conclude. It is important for the different components currently delivering services to our children to build a relationship of trust, respect, and understanding during this process. Thank you for raising this issue.

**HB 6500 AAC EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

CBIA fully supports the requirement that those seeking an elementary-level teaching certificate shall pass an "approved mathematics assessment in order to be eligible for such elementary education endorsement." This measure takes long strides towards the goal of ensuring that our new teachers are ready to serve the needs of the state's schoolchildren. Additionally, the development of a uniform system of accounting for school expenditures invokes practices our members employ every day in Connecticut's private sector businesses, which rank among the Nation's most efficient. We feel that a Common Chart of Accounts will serve to correct the murky condition of accounting at the school level, better enabling the public and lawmakers to



“follow the dollars” and keep abreast of how our education investments are being applied. This measure is a key first step to reforming school finance and we thank you for raising it.

CBIA opposes the following measure:

#### **HB 6498 AAC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Because the scheduled reforms that this measure would postpone were critically needed when they were passed, we feel that a further delay in their implementation would set Connecticut at an increasing disadvantage compared to other states and harm the future prospects of a large number of children. Many tens of thousands of Connecticut’s schoolchildren already score below basically proficient in reading and math. PA 10.111 was duly enacted to address this serious problem; we cannot afford to delay implementation any longer. We respectfully oppose this measure.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I would be happy to answer any questions that I can.

